DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 280 830 SP 028 737

AUTHOR Hawley, Willis D.
TITLE The Education of Japanese Teachers: Lessons for the United States?
PUB DATE [86]
NOTE 30p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Beginning Teachers; *Educational Change; Foreign Countries; Graduate Study; *Inservice Teacher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Teacher Certification; Teacher Characteristics; *Teacher Education Curriculum; *Teacher Education Programs; Teacher Salaries; Teacher Student Ratio; Teaching Conditions
IDENTIFIERS *Japan

ABSTRACT

This descriptive depiction of teacher education in Japan begins with a profile of Japanese teachers, their characteristics, salary scale, and the kinds of classrooms and schools they work in. A description of the conventional pattern of teacher education in Japan is organized in its sequential order: preservice education, induction, inservice training, and graduate study. Particular attention is paid to the inservice training of teachers, which is considered the most important part of a teacher's professional education and development, and is supported by local, county, and national resources. Major stategies being advocated for enhancing teacher quality in Japan are discussed, and it is noted that while changes are suggested in teacher selection, examinations, and formal training, the primary focus remains on inservice education. A brief discussion is presented on some elements in teacher education in Japan that should be considered when proposing reform efforts for teacher education in the United States. (JD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED280830

The Education of Japanese Teachers: Lessons for the United States?

by

Willis D. Hawley
Peabody College
Vanderbilt University

Introduction

The education reform effort in the United States has been stimulated in no small part by the success of the Japanese economy and the indisputably high academic achievement of Japanese elementary and high school students. While the reform effort in the United States recently has given substantial attention to teacher training, little reference has been made to how the Japanese educate their teachers. It seems worthwhile, therefore, to learn something about Japan's approach to teacher education. The Japanese "system" is very different from ours and seems to be based on different assumptions about how resources available for training teachers can best be utilized.

What we have to learn from Japan is, of course, limited by differences in our two cultures, among other things. Moreover, comparisons of the two systems of teacher education tell us little about the outcomes of the investments made. Nonetheless, there are many things to admire about Japanese education and since the quality of teachers surely accounts for at least some of the success of Japanese students—something the Japanese clearly believe—knowing more about teacher education in Japan may raise some questions about our own strategies which, in turn, could lead to improvements in the United States.

This depiction of teacher education in Japan is descriptive. While I make some evaluative judgments and discuss strategies for change, the bulk of the paper aims at providing information not otherwise readily available. Before I describe the way teachers in Japan are educated, it may be useful to put that discussion in context by providing a brief overview of teachers and teaching in Japan.

SP 028 737

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Japanese Teachers

Most Japanese teachers stay with their career throughout their working lives. The rate of attrition is very low though it is believed that early retirement is increasing among women teachers because of increasing stress they experience as a result of rising rates of student misbehavior.

There are many more teacher candidates than teaching jobs. More than one-fourth of all university graduates acquire teacher certification which involves completing specified courses and taking rigorous examination given by one of the 47 prefectures (read: large counties). Of those who were certified, only 28 percent became teachers (Kobayashi, 1986) and only 16 percent are employed immediately after college (Committee for Facilitating Research, 1986). Of course, not all those who seek certification seek a teaching position: Since the number of credits required to qualify for a teaching license for secondary schools is small, (14 out of 124), many students seek teaching licenses as a fall-back in the event that they can not get a better job. Experts say that teaching positions are increasingly hard to get, especially in primary schools and in large cities. In Tokyo, for example, it is estimated that only one out of six active candidates are employed. It is not uncommon for determined prospective teachers to seek a teaching position for 2-3 years before securing one.

Teachers in Japan are relatively well paid. As of August 1985, new public school teachers with a bachelor's degree earned on the average, a minimum of $13,440 (at 170 yen per dollar) (National Institute of Educational Research, 1986). In addition, teachers receive various allowances depending on where they live, the number of their dependents, whether they commute, the cost of their housing and other conditions. So, a beginning teacher in a heavily populated city with a dependent spouse and two children, who commuted from the suburbs,

could earn an additional thirty three percent of the average base salary (which includes a bonus and other general allowances for all teachers). Thus, the starting salary of such teachers would have been close to $18,000 in 1986. Increases in salary, in addition to annual cost-of-living-type improvements, are based on educational attainment and years of service with longevity increases continuing for 35 years. Thus, average teacher salaries in Japan are significantly higher than teacher salaries in the United States. The relative economic status of teachers is suggested by the fact that teachers must, by law, be paid more than government bureaucrats with similar education and years of experience, though the highest ranked government officials earn more than teachers. The salaries of professors at public universities, which are generally the most prestigious, are about the same as those of teachers with similar educational backgrounds.

In general, starting salaries for teachers compete favorably with all but the top entry jobs in industry. While teacher salaries can more than double in real value over a teacher's career, the prospect of really large salaries and benefits is open only to those who successfully climb the industrial ladder and top ranking civil servants can earn significantly more than senior teachers. But the certainty of reaching a secure well above average income is a clear benefit of teaching not enjoyed by other Japanese white collar workers.

Teaching in Japan

Teachers in Japan teach 240 days a year in comparison to the 180-190 days usually taught by American teachers. However, Japanese teachers typically teach fewer hours per week than do American teachers, usually providing 22, 17 and 15 hours of instruction respectively at elementary, junior high (grades 7-9) and high school levels (National Institute for Educational Research, 1986). On the other hand, teachers do supervise extra curricular activities, conduct weekend

and vacation "excursions," counsel students and visit parents (often at home) "on their own time." Indeed, teachers are considered responsible for their students' welfare at all times, though the practical meaning of this norm seems to vary a great deal.

The quality and style of school administrators varies considerably. In general, principals seem to involve teachers in key decisions. This is most true where teachers are best organized. Some teachers are selected to serve as support personnel for other teachers. These positions, called shunin, are staffed by teachers carrying regular course loads, but usually less extra curricular responsibility. Shunin are paid a very small amount (about $1.30 per day). The establishment of these positions by the Ministry of Education has been strongly opposed by the main teachers union (The Japan Teachers' Union) and the roles are taken seriously only by teachers who want to become administrators.

Japanese teachers seem to interact with each other fairly often and a study of a national sample of teachers I am just completing indicates that teachers frequently depend on each other for professional advice.

The number of students per class varies considerably but is usually much larger than the average class size in the United States. Class size has been declining in Japan and averaged about 35 elementary and junior high schools in 1984. But the average class is over 40 in many classrooms. On the other hand, since schools are required to have more teachers than the number of classes, the pupil/teacher ratio was much lower than the class size--25, 21 and 19 in elementary, junior high and high schools respectively (National Institute for Educational Research, 1986) thus providing teachers time for planning, professional development and interaction.

Most classes are taught using whole-class instruction. Japanese students do vary considerably in ability and motivation but tracking in the first nine

grades (through junior high) is prohibited and ability grouping is frowned upon.

Some stereotypes of Japanese education picture teachers dominating classes in which there is little student involvement and a heavy emphasis on memorization. Our visits to a dozen classrooms, and our discussions with dozens of Japanese teachers, suggest that this picture is incorrect, at least for elementary and junior high schools. We saw teachers in clear control but using their control to involve students--usually more than half the class in a given period. We saw students working in groups, involved in peer instruction, and engaged in debates. Homework is closely linked to class lessons, and higher order questions are asked frequently. No doubt there is enormous variation in ways students are taught in Japan but, teachers do not rely primarily on the lecture method. As one recent study of mathematics education concluded:

> "Mathematic thinking has been considered as the most important objective in mathematics education. Children express their views and thinking without hesitation. Children are always involved in activities. Childrens' activities and discovery methods are used in teaching mathematics . . ." (Yin Yin Mat, 1985; 108)

Japanese teachers are heavily influenced by the reality of college entrance examinations. The "exam hell" for Japanese adolescents that Americans hear about is very real and teachers focus on topics that are tested for and in various ways prepare their students to do well on the exams. The quality of a high school is judged by the quality of the universities to which its graduates gain admission.

Finally, Japanese teachers, while they are the focus of current school reform efforts, generally hold positions of high status in their community. I could find no quantitative data on this but the demand for teaching positions and the academic quality of aspirants seems to confirm this notion. the term sensei, to which teachers are entitled, conveys respect and honor.

Teacher Education in Japan

Introduction

Like all teachers, Japanese teachers learn from many sources but my focus will be on the role played in the professional development of teachers by colleges and universities and by formal in-service training. As is true elsewhere, there are many special kinds of schools and a number of special teacher licenses in Japan. The picture I draw below applies to teachers in conventional public schools where well over 90 percent of Japanese children are educated (though enrollments in private high schools is significant and growing). Kindergarten is not compulsory in Japan and I will not discuss the preparation of kindergarten teachers in order to simplify the presentation.

I have organized this description to reflect the conventional pattern of teacher education in Japan: preservice education, induction, in-service training, and graduate study. In addition, major changes in the way teachers are educated are now under serious consideration throughout Japan and these reform proposals will be discussed briefly.

Preservice Teacher Education

The basic requirements for preparing to teach, which are set out in national laws and administrative regulations, vary by the grade level to be taught. Teaching certificates are granted by specific prefectures and are good in any prefecture for life. Prospective teachers may apply for either first or second class certificates, which are differentiated by the amount of formal education required. In practice, most newly appointed elementary and junior high school teachers have first class certificates and almost all high school teachers are appointed with second class certificates. This means, in effect, that almost all new teachers have a bachelor's degree and almost none have a master's degree (which requires a two-year course of study in Japan) or any other form of

graduate study.

It is possible to be certified to teach in elementary school with only a junior college education and many older teachers do not have a bachelor's degree. However, because prefectural examinations are fairly rigorous and the number of teacher candidates is very great, junior college graduates are seldom appointed. It seems likely that the junior college route to a teaching credential will be eliminated in the near future, except for kindergarten teachers. There are two general types of four year college education for prospective teachers: general universities and teacher education universities. General universities certify about 80 percent of the prospective junior and senior high school teachers and 50 percent of the elementary teachers. The national Universities are generally more prestigious, whether they are general in character or teacher education focused. As one would expect, students in teacher education universities take more course work in what are referred to as education-related subjects.

The courses students must take in order to be certified are specified by the Ministry of Education. Particular universities may require additional courses for a "major" in education but one need not major in education to be certified at any level. So far as I could determine (no national data are available), virtually no prospective high school teachers major in education and most elementary teachers do. Most, but not all, junior high school teachers major in a traditional discipline.

The courses students must take to be certified in Japan are considerably fewer in number than those typically required of would-be teachers in the United States. A bachelor's degree in Japan requires the completion of 124 credits (these are roughly equivalent to the "units" or "hours" used to measure student coursework in the United States). Most high school and junior high school

teachers take what amounts to an academic major (32 or 40 credits depending on the subject taught), between 11 and 13 credits in pedagogical subjects, and the other requirements of each college or university.

Most secondary teacher candidates have two weeks of preservice practice-teaching and elementary teachers typically have four. Most students in general universities who want to teach do not otherwise have practical experiences in schools as part of their college courses. The "professional" courses that must be taken by those seeking certification at junior and senior high schools are:

Educational Principles (3 credits/hours)
Educational Psychology, with a focus on adolescents (3 credits)
Methods of Teaching (3 credits)
Moral Education (required only of junior high candidates) (2 credits)
Practice Teaching (2 credits)

Professional courses required of elementary school teachers include:

Educational Principles (4 credits)
Child Psychology (4 credits)
Study of Teaching Materials (including related teaching methods) (16 credits)
Moral Education (2 credits)
Practice Teaching (4 credits)

The preservice professional education of elementary school teachers involves from 1/3 to 1/4 of their college coursework. They are not required to major in a subject and each college or university may have a different course of study, as is true in the United States. The specific contents of the professional courses required of prospective teachers vary with the university and the professor. The emphases placed on particular subjects by the licensing examinations given by prefectures will often influence the content of college courses taught in that prefecture.

All teacher education programs, public or private, must be approved by the Ministry of Education. However, this approval is quite formalistic and once approval is given, it is not taken away. There is no recurrent review process with respect to teacher education programs, either by the ministry or any

private accrediting association. About 85 percent of all the institutions of higher education offer teacher training coursework and, as would be expected, the quality of that training varies enormously (Keda, 1982).

The general patterns for preservice teacher education described above are systematically different in the three new National Universities of Teacher Education. But few teachers graduate from these institutions. I will discuss their programs further when proposals for reform are outlined.

When considering the limited number of course requirements in subjects that the elementary teacher might teach, one should keep in mind that there is a standard curriculum in Japanese high schools that is comprehensive and fairly demanding. For example, college-bound high school graduates would have taken five or six mathematics courses, including calculus and statistics. The point is, as every international comparison of student achievement shows, most Japanese high school students are simply much better educated than most high school graduates in the United States. Moreover, to secure college admission, students must take both a national examination and examinations for specific universities. While many universities are not very selective, the most prestigious ones are. Most academically able students want to attend the most prestigious university they can enter because both public and private employers give strong preferences to the graduates of these universities. Thus, the examination system motivates students to take rigorous courses that will help them on the exams. The exams cover the basic academic subjects taught in elementary schools. In short, it is assumed in Japan that elementary school teachers know the academic subjects they teach.

The general routes to a teacher's license just described apply to all but a small percentage of the teaching certificates awarded. But certificates can also be obtained by passing examinations given by some faculties of education or

by Prefectural Boards of Education. These routes to a teaching position exist to recruit particularly talented people who have not taken education courses but who have demonstrated their expertise in specific subjects they would teach. These certificates appear to be used for certain applied fields like calligraphy or architecture and in specific aspects of special education. No data on how many persons receive their certificate in this way appears to be available, but the number is reported by Japanese officials I interviewed to be very small. Teachers may add other fields of certification to their primary field in this manner.

Induction to the Profession

As noted earlier, prospective teachers typically practice-teach for only two or four weeks. There is resistance within universities, at least the major ones, to expanding such supervised practical coursework since it is seen as reducing the time would-be teachers can devcte to other subjects. It is difficult to know whether this position is philosophically grounded or represents protection by different faculties (schools or departments) of their subject matter. Increased time for practice teaching is further discouraged by the fact that in most larger cities--where colleges and universities are heavily concentrated--the great numbers of teacher candidates are seen as a burden by school systems and placements are simply not available for all the students who want to practice-teach. A small number of universities, including the three new Universities of Teacher Education--which are located in smaller towns--do offer more extensive practice teaching opportunities for prospective elementary school teachers in special university attached schools (that serve randomly selected students), as well as other opportunities for in-school observations and interaction with teachers throughout the undergraduate years.

All newly appointed teachers undergo 20 days of intensive training at their

prefectural-level in-service center prior to taking their positions. Once on the job, the formal education opportunities of new teachers differs by school, local system and prefecture. In general, unless a principal is particularly attentive to new teachers, their in-service education is similar to that of other teachers.

In view of the overall commitment to in-service teacher education in Japan and the usual brevity of preservice teacher preparation, it seems surprising that the learning needs of first-year teachers in Japan are often as neglected as they are in the United States. As we will see in the subsequent discussion of reform proposals, this circumstance is thought to be a serious problem in Japan. It might be remembered that there are few first year teachers in a given school system because teachers seldom leave the profession and the school age population is declining.

Inservice Training

Inservice opportunities for professional development are available from local, prefectural and national sources.

National Programs. The Ministry of Education (Mombusho) provides teachers with a variety of ways to enhance their knowledge and competence. Each year Mombusho directly funds about 1200 teachers and aids in the funding of an additional 3800 teachers who are sent to other countries for two to five weeks to study the educational strategies being pursued elsewhere. These trips involve groups of teachers who may participate in workshops, observation and research. Mombusho also sponsors the National Education Centre Annex at Tsukuba that provides learning activities for experienced teachers that range from two days to a month in length. In 1984, 28,658 teachers participated in the National Centre's program (Kobayashi, 1986), about one tenth of these in residence at the National Education Centre Annex (Prasirtsuk, 1986). Further,

the Ministry, in effect, subsidizes the education of some 1800 teachers with at least three years of experience who participate in two-year long master's courses at one of three National Universities of Teacher Education. (I will have more to say about these National Universities of Teacher Education in the section below dealing with reform.)

In addition, thousands of teachers take courses and workshops at public and private universities whose costs are kept down by Mombusho, and the Prefectural Boards of Education sponsor extensive seminars for administrators and teachers in connection with the introduction of new curriculum guidelines. These guidelines are revised every ten years and teachers participating in the seminars are expected to teach other teachers about the changes and how to implement them.

From time to time, the publicly-funded Japan Broadcasting Corporation conducts televised short courses for teachers that are meant to provide model demonstrations of how to teacher particular topics.

Prefectural Support. Each prefecture funds an in-service training center for teachers that offers workshops and courses on a continuous basis. Every teacher is entitled to six days in-residence at their center every five years but some attend more often depending on the initiatives of their local school boards or their school principals. These experiences vary from 1 to 8 days and usually focus on ways to improve teaching methods for particular subjects, ways of dealing with students with special problems, or other prefectural or national priorities.

The center staffs, almost all of whom are former teachers chosen because of their reputations as effective teachers, decide on the center's curriculum. Most of the prefectural centers conduct annual mail surveys, undertake post-course evaluation, and consult with an advisory committee in which teachers are

the main participants to determine the topics about which teachers would most like to learn more.

The prefectural center staffs also visit schools, especially those most distant from the centers, to provide on-site seminars and consultation for individuals or small groups. The centers also have libraries accessible to teachers and administrators and engage, with varying degrees of energy, in efforts to disseminate new information and research. Two prefectures maintain separate science education centers that complement the activities of their general-purpose prefectural centers.

Though the prefectural centers carry out many functions typically carried out in universities, including research, continuing relationships between the centers and universities are uncommon. One reason for this is the universities' concern that collaboration of this sort would result in government--national or local--intrusion on their prerogatives. Prefectural centers educate far more inservice teachers each year than do universities. As noted above, prefectural boards, as well as some local boards of education, commonly provide teachers with opportunities for foreign travel and many pay selected teachers' full salaries, and sometimes additional expenses, while they attend the two year master's courses offered by the National Universities of Teacher Education.

Local Opportunities for Professional Development. About 25 of the 650 Municipal Boards of Education support in-service training centers, many of which are similar in general function the the prefectural inservice centers. These are typically in larger cities and focus on topics of special concern to the municipality. Many of the municipal centers appear to define their curricula so as to minimize duplication with the prefectural centers (Prasirtsuk, 1986: 28-29).

Almost all schools provide monthly programs of inservice teacher education. Some of these are organized by the principal or assistant principal, often in consultation with teachers. Such programs vary substantially in quality and most teachers we interviewed felt that the programs organized independently by administrators were boring and/or irrelevant, a complaint often heard from teachers in the United States.

School level in-service training in Japan takes several forms, the most common of which are: (a) visitations to other schools, (b) half or full day seminars organized by teachers, (c) group research projects, (d) independent study, and, (e) the demonstration of model lessons in a particular subject (Prasirtsuk, 1986). The incidence, quality and duration of these efforts vary significantly, by all reports, but no relevant data are now available.

Not uncommonly, teachers in Japan will design their own in-service study and discussion groups usually around the subjects they teach (e.g., English language discussion groups) or around particular problems that a school is having (e.g., student "bullying"). In many schools, the union takes the lead in organizing such groups, and in some schools the union regularly organizes an intensive program 2-3 times a year.

All school-level inservice programs are conducted on teachers' own time--usually weekends and vacation--except for visitations to other schools. And, teachers do not receive extra compensation for these activities.

Several years ago, Mombusho promoted the creation of positions called Shunin, akin to what we would call lead teachers or, perhaps, mentor teachers. One of the nominal functions of the Shunin is to foster professional development by acting as a resource person and model. However, the Japan Teachers' Union has discouraged the selected teachers, chosen by administrators, from participating because the positions promised to create status differences among

teachers. The very small salary supplement teachers receive for serving as shunin (now worth about $1.30 per day) is often donated by teachers to the Union to show their resistance to a role which presumably marks some teachers as professionally able than others.

Summary. Teachers in Japan have a wide variety of opportunities for continuing professional development. Some—such as foreign travel and two-year sabbaticals for advanced study involve very large per teacher expenditures. Local and prefectural programs for inservice education vary enormously in character, quality and assessibility. I have only pointed to general patterns above. The most common criticisms of inservice programs one hears from teachers are (a) that selection to the most elaborate of them may depend on whether teachers support school administrators rather than on whether the teachers selected are the most worth, or the most deserving and (b) that school level programs, however worthy, come on top of already heavy commitments.

Graduate Study

Few teachers in Japan have been or are involved in a program of graduate study that leads to an advanced degree. Universities and colleges do offer summer courses and workshops that many teachers attend but the American pattern of part-time pursuit of a graduate degree in unusual.

In 1984, only 1,850 students entered graduate study in education throughout Japan and only 140 of these were doctoral students. The number of new master's course students entering in 1984 was almost three times greater than the number who entered in 1975 but over 40 percent of this growth was in the master's courses at three innovative Universities of Teacher Education. The number of new doctoral students rose between 1975 and 1984 by less than 10 percent (Ministry, 1985). Overall, less than 3 percent of the teachers in Japan have an advanced degree.

There appear to be several reasons why these has been so little interest among Japanese educators in graduate study. First, graduate degrees have not been necessary to achieve advancement or relatively high status. Second, graduate study has not been common and access has not been as available as in the United States; the first master's course in education is but 30 years old. Third, part-time study toward a degree at the more prestigious universities is not an option. Universities seem to have little interest in adjusting to the needs of part-time students and the demand for in-service education one might expect from teachers is met by non-university sources, especially the prefectural centers. Fourth, the demand for undergraduate education has risen rapidly in recent years so that many professors already teach large classes and their facilities are overcrowded and generally inadequate. Fifth, while teachers can obtain substantial economic benefits from attaining an advanced degree--a master's degree increases teachers' base salaries about 17 per cent--the economic rewards from coursework without the degree are very low and are available only to high school teachers. Sixth, unlike the situation in many states, additional coursework is not required for continuing certification.

The current reform proposals do seek to make graduate study, in many fields, more accessible but systematic strategies for achieving this goal have not been developed.

Reforming Teacher Education

Japan is in the middle of what ministry officials and some other observers call the third major educational reform effort (the first was in the 1870's and the second followed World War II). Improving the quality of teachers has a major place on the agenda and teacher education is seen as one way to do this. It is important to note that the term "improving the quality of teachers" does not mean the same thing in Japan as it does in the United States. In Japan, the issue of whether teachers are academically able or know the subject they teach

is moot; no serious doubts are raised in this regard. Some teacher educators and some teachers are concerned about the lack of diversity and flexibility in instructional strategies teachers employ but since it is recognized that this problem derives in part from rigidities in curricula, norms against grouping students or "individualizing" instruction, and constraints on teaching related to the examination system, improving teachers' teaching methods is generally seen as less important than another problem: the need to improve teachers' responsiveness to the social and emotional needs of students. Critics of the teaching corps, including some leaders of the teachers' union, see the new generation of teachers as "lacking heart". Thus, the National Council on Educational Reform (1986) asserts that teacher training, preservice and inservice, should give greater attention to the ability of teachers to counsel and nurture students and provide for their moral education. The Council also urged that greater weight be given in selecting teachers to the candidates' likely sensitivity to variations in student needs.

Likewise, the Japan Teachers' Union (1983) argues that teachers need to "understand children as human beings, share desires and difficulties they have within themselves" and match their understanding of the subjects they teach with their knowledge of the development of children.

The post-World War II history of reform in teacher education has been concerned with the democratization of the country and the need to socialize teachers accordingly. Until recently, the improvement of teacher education has focused on the problem of supplying enough teachers to serve the demands of the economy for well-educated workers and managers, and the upgrading of the quality of preservice education to national minimum standards. Teacher education has moved from a system of teacher education in which normal schools that placed heavy emphasis on what was seen by critics as "narrow professionalism" played a

major role, to a more "open system" which placed few certification requirements in the way of the prospective teachers thus encouraging the diminution of professional coursework in universities (Kobayashi, 1986). While there have been recurrent efforts by teacher educators to reinstitute more preservice professional requirements, including required postbaccalaureate study, these proposals have not made much headway and are not on the current reform agenda.

Major strategies being advocated for enhancing teacher quality in Japan can be grouped into five categories:

1. increased emphasis in the selection and education of teachers on teacher competence in dealing with student diversity and misbehavior
2. changes in university entrance examinations
3. the introduction of a year-long internship for new teachers
4. the provision of alternative ways of achieving a teacher's license
5. the further development and systemization of a career long plan for inservice education

The last of these reflects Japan's commitment to inservice education but proposals that go beyond general principals have not been developed. Let me comment briefly on the other four strategies and then outline the character and functions of the relatively new Universities of Teacher Education which embody some of the more specific changes that the Ministry, and many teacher educators, seem to advocate for teacher education generally.

Competence in Student "Counseling". Historically, teachers in Japan have been vested with general responsibility for the welfare of their students. The concern, often referred to as "love," they manifest, has been seen as a source of the respect students accorded them. In recent years, there has been a breakdown in the respect students accord their teachers that is reflected in misbehavior and occasional violence. While the incidence of "bullying" of students and attacks on teachers is not great by comparison to many American schools, these events seem to many Japanese to reflect a general breakdown in

traditional values and internal sources of self-discipline and hard work. Teachers are being blamed for student misconduct, at least in large part. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that the lock-step approach to education, that characterizes many Japanese junior and senior high schools, is not responsive to the extant diversity of students' needs and abilities. Reform proposals to deal with this problem take the form of increased teacher education in ways of dealing with students. But, more fundamentally, both leftist and conservative reformers want more attention in the selection process to the personal commitments (love of students) and interpersonal skills of teacher candidates. Both the Japanese Teachers' Union and the National Council on Educational Reform (which is seen by the JTU as an agency of the Liberal Democratic Party it opposes) put some of the blame on the examination systems for entry to high school and college. For example, Ichiro Tanaka, the JTU president (Tanaka, 1986) argues that because the examination system emphasizes only academic skills, students who study almost full time to do well on them typically have not developed social skills and lack an understanding of why children do not excel in their studies. The more competitive positions in teaching are, the more likely it is that those students who do well on these examinations will obtain teaching positions.

Changes in High School and University Entrance Exams. The current examination nation system dominates the lives of most ambitious students. Virtually everyone in Japan has something bad to say about it. Reformers want the examinations to play a smaller role in selection to college and some want the examinations abolished all together for entry to high school. The National Council on Educational Reform wants examinations to be tied to curriculum and wants other considerations--grades, activities, personal characteristics--taken into account in making admission decisions. But despite its severe limitations,

the examination system persists. The examinations are seen as a way of promoting equality based on merit and, in a society with a history of elitism, this value is highly honored. The examinations are also thought to be effective in motivating students while other sources of social control appear to be diminishing in salience to young people. And, because the university examinations are institution specific, the reduction in their importance or the introduction of standardized examination is resisted by universities fearful of a loss of autonomy.

Developing Stronger Pedagogical Skills

Almost all critics of teacher education in Japan agree that prospective teachers, especially those educated at general universities, have inadequate opportunities to learn about and practice instructional techniques. When teacher education was "opened up" and moved into general universities, teacher certification requirements were minimized and only the minimum amount of space in the undergraduate curriculum was yielded by other faculties to education schools. Thus, there is limited time to offer more coursework in education, Clinical training is uncommon in part because university classes are large and didactic. Furthermore, research on effective teaching in Japan is not extensive (Committee for Facilitating Research, 1987) so that the claims on the curriculum made by teacher educators are not taken seriously. Except among some teacher educators, there is almost no discussion of extending teacher education into the post-baccalaureate years.

Practica within general universities are almost non-existent and except for the universities with "attached schools," practice teaching opportunities are hard to arrange. Thus, commonly heard calls for extending the period of practice teaching to double the meager time now required, seem to have made little headway.

Induction by Internship. As is true in the United States, there is in Japan, a growing belief that effective teaching would be facilitated if teachers entered schools in internship roles so that they can develop practical skills, including teaching methods and counseling competence, under the guidance of master teachers. The internship proposed would also extend the probationary period for new teachers. Unlike many induction improvement proposals in the United States, reforms proposed in Japan envision no role for universities in this process. And teacher educators, while generally endorsing the idea, are not seeking a role in the internship apparently because they fear government control of their teacher preparation programs. The internship is seen by the National Council for Educational Reform (NCER) as a way to screen prospective teachers. The proposal made by the NCER would pay the interns an entry salary, but the method of financing this cost has yet to be presented. Because of screening functions, and because those acting as mentors for the interns might seek to infuse these novices with pro-government sympathies support ideology, the JTU opposes the internship idea.

Alternative Routes to a Teaching License. The National Council on Education Reform seems convinced that there are many talented people who would like to become teachers but have not or will not travel the conventional paths to a teacher's license. (Never mind that more than one-fourth of the young college graduates in Japan are certified to teach and that only one-sixth of those certified to teach find a job in their first year out of college.) There are four proposals on the agenda to open up the teacher certification process. These would establish (a) special one-year or half-year training courses in universities that could be entered at any time, (b) certification tracks for attracting competent people to teach "vocational" and other practical subjects and foreign languages, (c) prefectural-specific certificates for "adults"

tailored to local needs, and (d) part-time opportunities to teach without a certificate. These proposals are not seen by the teacher educators I talked to as a threat to them. Alternative paths to certification now exist and are seldom used. The current system provides some protection to employing prefectures and municipalities that can attribute their choices to "the way the system operates". The JTU, however, is opposed to these plans arguing that they will reduce the status of teaching and provide Liberal Democratic Party dominated local boards with an opportunity to appoint compliant, anti-union personnel.

New Universities of Teacher Education

In 1980, two National Universities of Teacher Education admitted their first inservice master's degree students. These Universities (Hyogo and Joetsu) to which was added a third (Naruto) are officially described as "innovative." That is, they are to manifest and demonstrate reforms. These universities admit only teachers with three or more years of experience to the master's course. The teachers' two years of full-time, graduate-level study are fully funded by the prefecture in which the teacher is employed. The 300 students annually admitted to each university take both subject matter and pedagogical courses and engage in a substantial research or development project. Teachers are nominated by their prefectures; admission is based on scores on each University's admission test, recommendations by administrators, and other evidence of professional promise. It is assumed by the Ministry of Education--which handsomely supports these universities--and by the faculties of the universities, that the teachers who participate will assume formal and informal leadership roles in their schools. These assumptions have caused the Japan Teachers' Union to oppose the universities but there are more than enough qualified applicants to fill the available positions.

The three new Universities of Teacher Education were established initially as sources of in-service education, but may also have a role to play in the reform of pre-service teacher education. Each of these universities admits 200 students each year to pursue undergraduate courses of study that would qualify them to teach, assuming they passed prefectural examinations, in elementary or junior high schools. This course of study at each university varies but they place considerably more emphasis than other national universities on field experiences that are integrated with the professional curriculum. These universities also insist on what we would call broad liberal arts education and a focus in a subject matter field. The extent of the latter coursework depends on the speciality for which the student is preparing and range from 6-11 courses (each course being worth 2 credits). Recall the observation made earlier that these subject courses are added to a reasonably strong base of knowledge developed in high school.

How effective are these "innovative" programs? There apparently are no studies that compare the teaching competence of teachers educated at these universities with teachers educated elsewhere. But the schools attract students who score above the national average on the preliminary college entrance examinations. Students we interviewed at Hyogo said that they chose the school, among other reasons, because their job prospects were good. As noted, other teacher educators seem to know and respect the programs at these universities but they do not hold out much chance for gaining the support within their own universities for bringing about such changes.

The Prospects for Reform. How likely it is that the reforms being proposed will be implemented? Not surprisingly the improvement of teacher education is complicated by political concerns. While Mombusho has considerable authority with respect to elementary and secondary education, its power over higher education is more limited. Japanese universities enjoy considerable autonomy and they guard this privilege with great zeal. Moreover, within universities, faculties (schools) are fairly autonomous and key policies are not made without faculty approval. Thus, arrangements which would involve the sharing of power for teacher training by schools and universities are seen by universities as a potential threat to their independence. Because the three National Universities of Teacher Education have relatively less autonomy vis-a-vis Mombusho and administrators appear to have more discretion vis-a-vis faculty than is the case in other national universities they are more vulnerable to reform proposals. But they already embody many of the changes being advocated. And, as noted earlier, changes in the widely-criticized college entry examination system are considered by some university leaders as both a symbolic of a withdrawal from a commitment to traditional value and a threat to their autonomy.

The largest teacher's union, the JTU, opposes virtually all initiatives proposed by Mombusho at least in part because they are seen as the actions of the Liberal Democratic Party, whose hegemony in Japanese politics the JTU contests through its active role in the Japan Socialist Party, the largest opposition party. The JTU has been particularly strong in its opposition to inservice education offered under the auspices of the National Universities of Teacher Education or by various agencies supported directly the the Ministry and by prefectural inservice centers that are seen as agents of central control. In localities where the JTU is strong, it can apply considerable influence on local governments and on teachers. At the national level, while it does not have the

power to get new programs enacted it can sometimes, by joining with other groups resisting change--often for different reasons--keep new proposals from gaining parliamentary approval.

One of the constraints on the reform effort in Japan is the relative absence of empirical research on teaching or teacher educators. Researchers and others in the United States often lament the absence or misuse of research in the formulation of public policies. But, in Japan, empirical research on schooling and instruction is almost invisible. I examined the titles and abstracts of almost every one of more than 500 articles published in Japanese education journals. Fewer than 10 percent appeared to embody quantitative analysis and many of these dealt with learning disabled children or problems of assessing student performance.

My guesses about the prospects for changing teacher education Japan are: (a) alternate routes to a teaching license will be authorized but not widely used; (b) some greater emphases on personal characteristics of applicants will be given in selection and that counseling skills, seen to be related to teachers' personal characteristics, will be fostered through increased emphasis on them in inservice programs; (c) the further development and coordination of inservice training will be achieved; (d) changes in the content and emphasis given to university and high school entrance exams will be marginal and inadequate to address the concerns of their critics, and (e) internships will be implemented in some prefectures if Mombusho picks up a significant share of the cost but that, in any case, the probationary period for new teachers will be extended from six months to a year. I think that the new universities of teacher education will continue to prosper but that the lessons they teach about reform will not result in systemwide changes. One obstacle to such change is that their impact is conditioned by the receptivity of school administrators to the

ideas that experienced teachers bring back with them following their two years of intensive study. There is no program to foster the implementation of newly learned practices.

Conclusion

Does the way the Japanese educate their teachers have lessons for the United States? Each reader may have a different answer to this question; the conclusions one draws from comparisons of apples and oranges no doubt presents an opportunity to cover over one's biases in analytical trappings. Let me identify four lessons from Japan that I think those who would reform teacher education in the United States may wish to consider.

First, whatever its shortcomings in readying teachers for practice, it seems clear that the "open system" of teacher preparation in Japan contributes to the large pool of academically able potential teachers. It is a buyers market. Given the size and quality of the pool, the problem then becomes one of selection, socialization and further development. The internship proposal and other reforms discussed above address these problems (as do existing practices), but the fact that universities are not tied into these inservice processes seems likely to limit their effect in bringing about change.

Second, perhaps the most obvious difference between teacher education in the United States and Japan is that the Japanese place less emphasis on preservice preparation and more emphasis on inservice professional development. As implied earlier, inservice education is receiving substantial attention in current discussions about educational reform in Japan. This is in marked contrast to the relative absence of such concern by various national and state commissions and task forces in the United States.

There are several reasons for this. Efforts by teacher educators to increase the number of preservice courses have been opposed by their university

colleagues, and the private colleges and former normal schools that rely on teacher candidates for enrollment do not want to open the door to changes that might strengthen teacher education in the more prestigious universities. In addition, the Japanese do not take the content of a student's college education very seriously. Classes are large, grading standards are low, and professors generally do not invest heavily in their teaching (Rieschauer, 1981). Undergraduate education is seen as a cooling out time for students who have weathered the stress of junior high and high school pressures. Without exception, college students in Japan will tell you that they studied much harder in high school than they do in college.

If this was all there was to an explanation for the low investment in preservice teacher education, one might expect, given the excess supply of teachers, that there would be a move to extend preservice teacher education by adding a year of postbaccalaureate study or at least by providing incentives for prospective high school teachers to obtain first class certificates (a Master's degree). But there is little such interest in Japan. Another reason for the emphasis on inservice education is that this strategy is seen to be a cost-effective way of enhancing teacher competence, one that recognizes that what teachers need to know about teaching will change over time. As Director General Horashi Keda of the National Institute for Educational Research has explained:

> "Great expectations are placed on in-service training for the improvement of teacher quality. This relates partly to the employment system of teachers, by which teachers are employed for life and work within the same place... There has therefore been a tendency for employers to prefer the expansion of post employment education." (1982: 17-18).

Both the teacher educators and students I talked to stressed the cost-effectiveness of the inservice teacher education relative to preservice education (though most of these had themselves not experienced very intensive preservice preparation programs). The implicit theory they espoused of teacher

learning might be described as developmental--they saw teachers' capacity and motivation to learn being enhanced by their experiences in teaching.

A third lesson from the efforts to reform teacher education in Japan might be derived from the fact that the improvement of teacher education is a continuing process in which few ideas die and most require a fairly long gestation period before they are birthed. But the process of proposal, debate, adaptation and reconsideration is infrequently burdened by evidence of the likely effects of proposed changes based on pilot studies, systematic international comparisons and the like. Those who advocate improvements in teacher education in Japan, and I think in the United States, claim too much for it. The idea that teaching teachers about how better to counsel students will address the changing attitudes of young people in Japan toward authority is wishful and invites blame being placed on teachers for problems they have little part in constructing. A sandbag is an effective way to control the irrigation of a rice paddy, but it is an inappropriate tool to reroute a floodtide.

A final lesson that I take from my efforts to learn more about teacher education in Japan is that the Japanese have been much influenced the models of teacher education in the United States. At least when we are at our best, the Japanese think we have a lot to offer them. To be sure, there is concern in Japan that its educational system is too westernized. But, in general, they find our efforts to integrate theory and practice, to expand graduate study and to infuse our methods courses with research findings to be worth their consideration. This lesson suggests to me that it seems worth knowing more about what we do well in the United States.

References

Japan Teachers Union (1983). Educational Reform in Present Japan (Summarized Edition). Report of the Second JTU Council on Educational Reform.

Keda, Hiroshi (1982). Development and present situation of educational administration in Japan, (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Asia and the Pacific, Occasional Papers No. 11, September).

Kobayashi, Tetsuya (1986). Teacher education in Japan. Paper presented to the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco, April, 1986.

Mat, Yin Yin (1985). Some aspects of mathematics education in Japan. Report on the inservice teacher training program for foreign teachers and research abstracts. (Hiroshima: Hiroshima University, pp 100-111).

Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (1985). Statistical abstract of education and science and culture: 1985 edition. (Tokyo: Research and Statistics Division, Minister's Secretariat, MESC).

National Institute for Education Research (1986). Basic facts and figures about the educational system in Japan. (Tokyo: NIER, March).

Prasirtsuk, Wannapa (1986). In-Service Education and Training (INSET) in japan: Its Applications to INSET in Thailand, a report submitted to the faculty of Education, Hiroshima University.

Rieschauer, Edwin (1981). Japan: The story of a nation.

Tanaka, Ichiro, personal interview with the author, Tokyo, June 26, 1986.

Committee for Facilitating Research, Japan Association of Universities of Teacher Education (1986). Teacher educaiton in Japan (Dai-ichi Hoki Publishing Co: Tokyo).